

Thornton Heath Nursery School

Pridham Road, Thornton Heath, CR7 8RS

Inspection dates 10–11 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The head of school has made a strong contribution to raising the school's overall effectiveness to good.
- Leaders and governors have rapidly improved the quality of the teaching. As a result, children achieve well and are prepared well for the next phase of schooling.
- Leaders have improved ways of checking how well children are learning. All adults make good use of these improved checks on children's progress. Adults quickly identify children who need additional support. They take timely action to meet their needs.
- Governance has improved. Governors know the school well and what needs to be done to improve it further. They robustly hold it to account. This secures good achievement.
- Leaders and governors have an honest and clear understanding of their school and they have made a huge and positive difference in a short time. The school is well placed to continue to improve.
- The school engages extremely well with parents and carers. The parent workshops give parents the skills to help them support their children's learning at home.
- The activities provided for children, both indoors and outside, are varied and stimulating and help them learn well.
- Children's behaviour is good. Children get on well with one another. They cooperate happily in their activities. Squabbles are rare and any incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- The school keeps children extremely safe. Adults who work with the children are rigorously checked. The site is secure.
- Teaching is caring and good in quality. Adults plan well to meet the children's needs. They provide the children with activities that allow them to develop a wide range of skills.
- Teaching promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Children develop a love of nature and of living things.
- Children achieve well. They make good progress in acquiring language and number skills. By the time they leave, their attainment is in line with other children of their age. They are well prepared for the Reception Year.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs do well in their learning. The head of school ensures that those with particular needs go on to the schools that will best benefit them.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Adults do not always expect the most from children, particularly the most able. They do not always ensure that activities have a high enough level of challenge.
- When asking questions, adults do not always wait long enough for children to develop their thoughts, or to answer as fully as possible.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector looked at the children's learning in the indoor and outdoor play areas, some of which were joint observations of children's learning with the head of school. The inspector observed the children eating lunch, tidying up and taking part in group sessions. She attended a staff planning meeting.
- The inspector held meetings with the head of school and with both of the co-executive headteachers. She met three representatives from the local authority. She also met the Chair of the Governing Body, together with one other governor. The Vice-Chair attended the final inspection meeting.
- The inspector took account of responses to a questionnaire from 13 members of staff.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents and carers. She also took account of the school's own survey of parents' and carers' views. There were too few responses to Parent View, the online survey, to be taken into account.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents. These included the school's own views of how well it is doing and the minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspector looked at information on the children's attainment and progress, and examined records relating to behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Natalia Power, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized nursery school.
- The provision for two-year-olds in the school is inspected separately and did not form part of this inspection.
- The school is led and managed by the Pegasus Academy Trust. This is a multi-academy trust with five local primary schools within its remit. As nursery schools are not currently permitted to become academies, the school and its governing body remain in local authority control.
- The head of school has been in post since September 2014.
- Most children come from a wide range of ethnic heritages. The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- More pupils than average are entitled to support from the early years premium. The early years premium is additional government funding for children eligible for free school meals or those looked after.
- The proportion of children who are disabled or who have special educational needs is higher than average.
- Around one in five children attends full time. The rest attend part time in either the morning or afternoon sessions.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve the quality of teaching, so that it is outstanding, make sure that all adults:
 - have high expectations of the children’s progress, particularly that of the most able, and provide highly challenging activities for them
 - when questioning children, give them time to develop their ideas, so that they think about their answers and use as much appropriate language as possible in their replies.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- In under a year, the school has made considerable and rapid improvement. This is due to the purposeful leadership of the school, and particularly to the energy and vision of the head of school. She has made a strong contribution to improving the school. Working in close and highly effective partnership with the two executive headteachers, she has, in the words of one parent, 'taken the school by storm'.
- The entirely positive responses by staff, to the survey of their views, show that they back the leadership. As a result, the school is a harmonious environment where teaching is strong and children behave well.
- Middle leaders, spearheaded by the head of school, quickly identify what needs to improve. They have changed the look of the school, cleaning and tidying up neglected areas and buying new and stimulating resources to help children learn.
- Through strong management, the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Leaders have set up new and highly effective systems for ensuring that staff performance and pay awards are rigorously linked to children's progress. Leaders have a strong focus on how well the children are learning. Leaders give staff clear guidance on what they need to do to improve, and check that the advice is followed. As a result, children learn well and are prepared effectively for the next phase of schooling.
- Leaders have improved ways of checking children's progress in their learning. New systems include computer and photographic evidence. These show clearly the level of children's skills at the start and through their time at the school. This information informs everyone at the school how much progress the children make. Governors have detailed, relevant information with which to ask searching questions. The adults who work with the children can see quickly who is doing well and who needs extra support.
- Leaders and governors know their school well and accurately judge its strengths and remaining areas for improvement. They are aware, for example, of occasional inconsistencies in teaching. They rightly judge their school to be good, and are modest about the strength and effectiveness of their leadership. Based on their analytical and robust self-evaluation, and the changes that have been made swiftly, the school is very well placed to continue its journey of improvement.
- Middle leaders effectively manage important areas of the school's work. Their planning for the next day's teaching, accurately based on the children's current interests and learning, is exemplary.
- The local authority provides much helpful support to leaders. Alerted by governors, it secured the school's journey of improvement by brokering close links with the academy trust. This has dramatically improved the quality of leadership. The local authority continues to provide effective support, particularly in helping leaders to evaluate the quality of teaching.
- The school has not yet received the early years pupil premium. However, leaders and governors have drawn up clear plans for its use. These focus on providing extra adult support for those eligible for the additional funding.
- Although nursery schools are not eligible for additional sport funding, the school is active in promoting sport and physical activities for the children. The inspector observed the effective work of the football coach and the dance teacher in promoting the children's skills.
- Parents and carers who spoke to the inspector and those who completed the school's survey of their views were extremely happy with the school. The school understands the immense importance of working with the whole family, not just with the children. Several parents told the inspector that the school supports the whole family in times of need. The parent workshops are popular and well attended. Parents greatly appreciate how the school helps them to help their children, for example by recommending books they can read with the children and resources they can make at home.
- The head of school makes sure that families of children who arrive with little English are put in touch with fellow speakers of their own language, so that neither the adults nor the children feel isolated. There is well coordinated provision to support these pupils at school.
- Leaders and governors carry out their obligation to keep pupils safe extremely effectively. They ensure that all staff are properly trained and that all safeguarding procedures are well organised and rigorously checked.
- Leaders have created a culture in which children feel safe and secure. Children from all heritages and backgrounds get on extremely well together. There is no bullying or discrimination against anyone. Each child has an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The school promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly. One aspect of this is the way children develop a love of nature and are encouraged to wonder at its variety. For example, while watering the school's fruit and vegetable beds, children noticed snails in the earth. The

adult encouraged them to search for more snails and to explore how they looked and what they did.

- The school provides children with a rich programme of stimulating activities. Water and sand play are used to introduce children to simple scientific concepts and to explore them in language. Paint is used to introduce children to the concept of mixing colours with white to produce 'light' and 'dark' shades. In all such activities adults skilfully help children to develop their confidence with language and in early mathematical skills. The activities provided for the children promote good literacy and numeracy development.
- The school promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly, for example by encouraging them to use dolls as puppets to retell fairy tales. The outside play areas are used effectively to stimulate children's creative development and to give children excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills.
- The school prepares children extremely well for growing up in modern Britain. Children learn about different cultures and religions. For example, during Eid, parents came to school to paint mehndi patterns on the hands of all the children. They make Jamaican pineapple juice. In such ways children learn to celebrate diversity and individuality.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is largely new since the previous inspection. Governors commissioned a review of their performance after the previous inspection. They have acted quickly to implement recommendations. This has strengthened their work considerably.
 - Governors visit regularly to see the school's work for themselves. They keep up to date with how well the children are achieving. Leaders provide them with clear figures on children's progress. Such information enables governors to ask searching questions and to understand how well the children are doing in comparison to children in other schools across the country.
 - Governors assure themselves about the quality of teaching through regular reports from the headteacher, and from informal walks around the school, several undertaken with representatives of the local authority. These procedures enable them to see that the children are learning well.
 - Governors secure excellent value for money from the staff. Working closely with leaders and the academy trust, they set clear targets for performance from staff. They ensure that progression along the pay scales is linked to children's learning. They are not afraid to tackle underperformance, should it occur.
 - Safeguarding is a high priority. Policies are regularly updated. Governors ensure that the site is safe and that the school meets current statutory regulations. Governors are well trained in safeguarding procedures, such as safer recruitment. They make sure that new governors are soon given training.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is good. They get on well together and quarrels are rare. Children are ready to take turns and to share the equipment. For example, a group of boys playing with a wooden train set cooperated happily in extending the rails and putting new rolling stock on the lines.
- Children have positive attitudes to learning. They like trying new activities. They are prepared to stick at tasks for a long while. Behaviour is not exceptional, because adults occasionally do not give them enough time to become immersed in activities. This sometimes interrupts their concentration and can slow down their learning.
- Children attend regularly. Absences and lateness are rigorously followed up and this teaches young children the importance of school.
- Children who stay for lunch eat their packed lunches in a sociable way, sitting round tables and chatting to the adults and one another. The school keeps a close eye on their lunches to make sure they do not bring in anything that might cause another child to have an allergic reaction.
- Children who attend breakfast club or the after-school care provision are very well looked after. They receive healthy food and are provided with attractive and worthwhile activities. A particularly good feature of the after-school care is the use of 'all about me' scrapbooks. These let parents know what the children have been doing and give them a chance to communicate with the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. Adults are carefully checked to rule out any risk to the children. The site is secure. The school ensures that unwanted adults cannot get in, and fences and locked doors make it impossible for even the most adventurous child to get out.

- There is no bullying at the school, confirmed by the school's records, and children are kind to one another. The children learn at a basic level how to keep safe when using a computer.
- Children are carefully shown how to keep themselves safe. For example, adults show them how to hold the plastic knives safely when cutting up vegetables.
- The outdoor play areas have the right level of adventure for the children, while remaining a safe environment. Children enjoy climbing the knotted ropes up to the wooden playhouse and, even if they fall, there is a soft landing.
- Children who fall over or bump into things when playing are carefully examined to see if further treatment is needed. Each incident is carefully recorded and parental signatures are obtained if children require treatment.
- The school plans ahead rigorously for any possible risks that might arise when taking children out on trips. Things that might go wrong, including risks from the weather or from children falling ill, are thought about in advance. This vigilance ensures that children are safe, whether onsite or when taken out of school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Adults care for the children very well. They make sure that children play peaceably together, and that children do not play on their own or become sad.
- Planning is a strength of the teaching. The inspector sat in on a planning meeting and noted how the children's interests formed the basis of planning for the next day. For example, children had spoken about the Greek salad, tzatziki, and decided that they did not like the sound of it. Next day the adults brought in tzatziki ingredients and attractively illustrated recipe sheets, with pictures so that the children could identify each ingredient. The children were encouraged to chop up the cucumber and mint, and had plenty of chances to smell, touch and taste the ingredients hygienically. Later, they handed round the salad with pieces of pitta bread, and the children discussed the food, new to many of them, with interest.
- Many activities have a good level of challenge. For example, children enjoyed making patterns out of natural materials, such as wood and stones, lining them up in groups along a strip of cloth on the ground. This activity promoted their mathematical reasoning, as they learned how to manage sequences of numbers. The children also enjoyed learning new words, such as 'cobbles'. The emphasis on developing communication skills provides pupils who speak English as an additional language with many effective opportunities to improve their language skills. However, not all activities have such a high level of challenge, and some children, particularly the most able, are not always stretched sufficiently.
- Adults generally give children ample time to explore and find things out for themselves. For instance, children noticed a spider's web in the bushes. Instead of rushing them to the next activity, the adult took the time to follow the children's interests. She helped them to notice things that they could not at first see. She asked them to bring magnifying glasses, and the children exclaimed in amazement at the different colours of the spider they could now see.
- Occasionally, the adults are too quick to answer their own questions, before the children have had a chance to think about the topic. In such cases, the children do not have time to develop their thoughts and to answer in full sentences.
- The teaching promotes children's reading skills well. Adults are often to be seen reading to children, both indoors and out. They read with expression, and the children show their enjoyment by joining in the familiar catchphrases, such as, 'Don't eat the red hot chilli pepper' from David Mills' story, *Lima's Red Hot Chilli*.
- Writing is taught well. Children are encouraged to write in many different media, using chalk, paper or whiteboards with felt pens. Children 'book' their turn on the wheeled vehicles by writing their names on a whiteboard. Such opportunities develop their writing skills successfully.
- The teaching develops children's number skills well. No opportunity is missed to get the children counting. Even the simple activity of making playdough birthday cakes gives them the chance to count the 'candles', or matchsticks, which the children push into the dough.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children achieve well in their time at the school. They make good progress in acquiring a range of skills. Children make good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills from starting points which vary, but which are generally below those typical for their age.
- Children learn their sounds and letters (phonics) in groups that successfully meet their differing abilities.

- Children leave the school with skills that are generally typical for their age. They are successfully prepared for the Reception Year. By the time they leave school, children are confident in number and reading skills.
- Disadvantaged children, those entitled to free school meals, attain as well as others in the school and make similar good progress. There are no gaps in their progress compared to other children. This is because the school accurately checks how well they are doing and is careful to support any child at risk of falling behind.
- Disabled children and those who have a range of special educational needs do well at the school. Their needs are diagnosed early, and the school provides timely and effective support. Parents of children who have a range of complex needs spoke highly of the school. Several praised the head of school for using her experience as an inclusion manager to get their children placed swiftly in special schools that would best meet their needs.
- The most-able children do well and make generally good progress. The school provides effective support for them in groups aimed at meeting their needs. In one such group, for example, the children discussed the needs of babies. One child, asked why babies need dummies, answered, 'Because, if they cry, you have to put it in their mouth.' Such opportunities to think for themselves help the most able to make good progress in line with other children at the school. However, they do not always receive the right challenge to make as rapid progress as they could.
- Children who speak English as an additional language make similar good progress to others in the school. The school works effectively to develop their speaking skills as rapidly as possible. Adults use a wide range of resources, such as visual timetables, and use signs and gestures wherever possible to make clear what they are saying.
- Current leaders have not yet seen an entire year group through the school. Nevertheless, the school has planned effective transition arrangements with the range of local schools to which children will transfer. The school keeps robust records of each child and these will be transferred to make transitions smooth. The children currently at the school are prepared effectively, both academically and emotionally, for moving confidently to the next phase of schooling.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131723
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	462178

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patricia Salami
Headteacher	Lynne Sampson (Co-Executive Headteacher), Jolyon Roberts (Co-Executive Headteacher), Debbie Butler (Head of School)
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2013
Telephone number	020 8684 0494
Fax number	020 8684 0494
Email address	THNS@schmail.net

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

